

Abram's First Severe Trial

Introduction & Review

- ❑ God called Abram to leave the things in life that brought stability & security while trusting the Lord with his future (Gen. 12:1).
- ❑ God promised Abram a new homeland, a great nation, wealth, fame and he will be a great blessing to others (Gen. 12:1-3).
- ❑ Abram responded to God's call in obedience in spite of the real challenges in life (Gen. 12:4-6) – age & enemies.
- ❑ Abram responded to God's faithfulness with worship in spite of the real challenges in life (Gen. 12:7-9).

I. Abram's Trial (Gen. 12:10-16)

A. The nature of his trial (Gen. 12:10)

Famine is a prolonged and extreme lack of food (Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible). The bible does not always give the moral or spiritual significance of a famine (v. 10). This is a historical fact, but under God's providential rule. This was a "severe" famine to test Abram's faith (1Pe. 1:6-7).

B. The nature of his response (Gen. 12:10b-16)

Abram responded to the famine without prayer or consulting with God (v. 10b). This was a plan to meet the immediate need for food – "sojourn". Abram responded to potential danger with fear and deception – Sarai agreed (v. 11-13). God had just promised him children & land (12:7). He willfully exposed his wife, Pharaoh, & Pharaoh's household to potential sexual sin. Abram received some financial benefit from his deceptive plan (v. 14-16; Pr. 15:16).

APPL: Every believer will have experiences in life & ministry that test the quality & genuineness of our faith. Every believer will face some severe trials that will tempt you to respond in fear & deception. But we must learn from this example to call upon the Lord for help in our time of trouble & temptation; for strength & courage not to yield to temptation. Even when you must stand alone for righteousness against a spouse, children, close relatives or friends, the Lord will strengthen you by His word & Spirit (1Co. 10:13).

II. God's Deliverance (Gen. 12:17-20)

A. God's intervention (Gen. 12:17)

Abram's deception made his wife vulnerable to another man and caused harm to Pharaoh along with his household (v. 17). God sent plagues or diseases to deliver Sarai because she had become part of a heathen harem. Abram (the man of faith) created this messy situation, but God in great mercy delivered Sarai & Abram from this web of sin. Neither Abram nor Sarai is praying to God for help, but carrying out the sinful plan. This foreshadows the deliverance of Israel 430 years later.

B. Pharaoh's response (Gen. 12:18-20)

Pharaoh sternly reproved Abram for his deception with Sarai (v. 18-19). We are not told how the deception was discovered, but God made it clearly known to Pharaoh. When believers attempt to hide sin, God reveals it (Ps. 32:3-4; 51:4). When believers will not address their own sin, God may even use an unbeliever to bring reproof. Pharaoh quickly expelled Abram from Egypt with an escort to ensure his departure (v. 20).

APPL: God will intervene in a believer's life when he or she continues to live in known sin, unwilling to address it. God's intervention may not be pleasant for the believer or others involved in the sinful activity. This is an act of love & mercy from God our Father who will not allow us to simply destroy our lives with half-truths, deception, deflection, diversions, schemes & plans devised in times of trouble for temporary relief. This happened to these two models of faith (Abraham & Sarah) and it can surely happen to us if we are careless, prayer less & fearful in times of trouble.